

PEOPLE & THINGS

IT is time that our beautiful £5 notes regained their self-respect. My researches are incomplete, but so far as I can ascertain there is no other country in the world where the presenter of a high denomination banknote is required to sign his name and address on its back, as I was recently required to do at a station of British Railways.

This, as a matter of fact, was contrary to the regulations of British Railways which, since the metallic thread was introduced into the notes in 1944, has not required a counter-signature. But I am amazed and horrified to learn from the Chief Cashier of the Bank of England that "it is usual for the Bank themselves to request the presenter of a £5 note at any of their counters to write his name and address on the reverse of the note."

Apart from the fact that the £5 note is, to my mind, the handsomest banknote in the world and should not be subjected to such defilement, it could be argued, I think, that the practice of counter-signatures to Mr. P. S. Beale demonstrates a lack of confidence in the Govt. and Compa. of the Bank of England and in our currency.

I hope someone in the Treasury with a moment to spare will take the matter up.

Music Prizes

INDIFFERENCE to bullion has never been one of Mr. Igor Stravinsky's vanities, and it seemed to me, last Thursday evening, that the composer of "Petrouchka" received the Royal Philharmonic Society's gold medal with unfeigned appreciation.

I was reminded, in fact, of a famous incident in one of Mr. Stravinsky's sojourns in the United States. The late George Gershwin had expressed the wish to take lessons in composition from Mr. Stravinsky and was duly given an appointment.

"You are already a professional musician, I believe, Mr. Gershwin?"

"Why, yes," said the composer of "A Rhapsody in Blue." "You might call me that."

"I take it that you don't make a living by it?"

A hundred and sixteen thousand dollars last year," said

By **ATTICUS**

Gershwin, "after deduction of tax."

"In that case, Mr. Gershwin"—Mr. Stravinsky held open the door—"you need no lessons from me."

Strabismuseum

IHAD always supposed the Royal Society to be the gravest of institutions, and its annual Conversazioni the negation of small talk.

But the other evening I took part, as a licensed interloper, in the distinguished revels, and was delighted to find that many of the exhibits were geared to my powers of understanding. The *art nouveau* butterflies would have delighted anybody; likewise the starfish, the living lobster, the Everest oxygen equipment (generally demonstrated by Mr. Bourdillon himself) and that curious musical instrument, the pyrophone, for which both Berlioz and Gounod had a perverse liking.

My first favourite was the "Apparatus for Determining the Speed of Swimming of Fish." This was a glass-walled horizontal wheel, in which an undriving goldfish swam for hour upon hour at nearly three knots. We are a sporting nation, and there were many who, like myself, returned to cheer the finny stalwart on his thousandth lap; but at 10.30 p.m. I was gratified to find that humanity had prevailed over science, and the little machine bore the notice "Fish Resting."

upon, eaten into, and sometimes the form was only the shell holding the hole.

"Recently I have attempted to make the forms and the spaces (not holes!) inseparable, neither being more important than the other. In the last bronze, Reclining Figure, I think I have in some measure succeeded in this aim.

"What I mean is perhaps most obvious if the figure is looked at lengthwise from the head end through to the foot end and the arms, body, legs, elbows, etc., are seen as forms inhabiting a tunnel, in recession. Seen in plan the figure has 'pools' of space."

Next question.

Flying Sorcery

THE only time that flying saucers have brought a light to my eye was when a Detroit garage-hand skimmed the lid of a kettle into the air, photographed it and sold the photograph for a large sum to an American magazine. For the rest I have not devoted much thought to the problem and I had assumed that the authorities knew the answer and just didn't want to give it.

But I am intrigued to learn that the Canadian Department of Transport has now appointed a team led by a Mr. Wilbert D. Smith to spend the long summer nights in a lonely corner of Ontario watching for flying saucers.

This first flying-saucer watching-station will be operated on a



From a colour photograph by Felix Man.

Mr. Henry Moore's "Pools of Space"

THE other day I met Mr. Henry Moore and had the effrontery to ask him the reason for the holes in his sculpture. Without rancour he advised me to consult "Eight European Artists," by Felix Man, published by Heinemann, which, with an introduction by Graham Greene and much brilliant colour photography by Mr. Man, describes the studios, working methods and intentions of the following: Braque, Chagall, Leger, Le Corbusier, Matisse, Moore, Picasso and Sutherland.

Therein, in his own handwriting, Mr. Moore writes: "At one time the holes in my sculpture were made for their own sakes. Because I was trying to become conscious of space in the sculpture—I made the hole have a shape in its own right, the solid body was approached

round-the-clock basis and will be officially known as the "Ionospheric Measurement Station."

Pandora's Dossier

THERE is more to it than that. A Canadian official in London tells me: "We intend to do what we can to prove or disprove the existence of flying saucers. We have noticed that most flying-saucer reports are made in cycles of eighteen-month intervals, coinciding with the time when the Earth and Mars are in closest proximity."

Moreover, the Rev. Milton Notheurft, a Methodist Minister of Maquoketa, Ohio, has just announced that the U.S. Government has more than eleven hundred photographs of flying saucers, "but it won't tell all it knows for fear of creating a panic."

Of course they may all be kettle-hits but still—